

SARRACENIA PURPUREA (SARRACENIACEAE)
IN LOUISIANA

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Sarracenia purpurea L. was once thought to extend from British Columbia along the Canadian-United States border to the Atlantic coast, down the coast to Georgia and Florida, and west along the Gulf Coastal Plain to Louisiana. However, Naczi et al. (1999) have recently separated the Gulf Coastal Plain population as a distinct species, *S. rosea* Naczi, F.W. Case & R.B. Case, which does not reach Louisiana but occurs in southwest Georgia, north Florida, south Alabama, and southeast Mississippi. However, two specimens—one collected in 1842 by William Marbury Carpenter (s.n. U.S.) and the other collected in 1870 by Americus Featherman (s.n. LSU)—both of which have been identified as *S. purpurea* by Naczi et al. (1999) and both reported from southeast Louisiana west of the range of *S. rosea*, are anomalous; they leapfrog *S. rosea* and are disjunct from the nearest *S. purpurea* population in eastern Georgia (see MacRoberts and MacRoberts [1988] for a detailed review of *S. purpurea* in Louisiana). Naczi et al. (1999) suggest possible labeling error to account for these anomalous specimens.

The label of the Featherman *Sarracenia purpurea* specimen, along with other Featherman collections from the same locality, is shown in Figure 1. MacRoberts and MacRoberts (1988) originally interpreted the script just below "Covington" on the *Sarracenia* specimen to read "AF," the collector's initials. Naczi et al. (1999:1200) question this interpretation: "The script leaves determination of the final pair of letters equivocal. Instead of ... Covington/AF [Americus Featherman] ... the label may actually read '... Covington/AL [Covington, Alabama]." According to this assessment, the specimen is from Covington Co., Alabama, not Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. On reexamination, this interpretation fails for two reasons. First, the script following "Covington" is neither "AF" nor "AL," but "St T." Of the Featherman specimens with "Covington" on the label, some read "Covington" only, but others have something written below "Covington." We (and Diane Ferguson, pers. comm.) examined these and found that what was written was either "St Tam." or "St T.," abbreviations for "St. Tammany." Second, corroborative evidence that this specimen comes from Louisiana is to be found in Featherman's (1871) published description of

Sarraceniaceae
Sarracenia ^{purpurea} ~~ultra~~ ~~Howe~~
 (Did flower?) ~~Swamp~~ ~~bl.~~
 Covington
 A. J.

Cactaceae
Opuntia *Tiencus* *Indica*
 Howe
 J. Aug. Covington
 A. J.

Polygonaceae
Polygonum *ramosa* Ell.
 J. July Covington
 A. J.

FIG. 1. Label information for *Sarracenia purpurea* and two other Featherman specimens from Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana.

its provenance. In 1869 the Louisiana State Legislature passed Act. No. 72 in which professors of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and the Military College (later Louisiana State University) were to spend four months each year in survey work in their respective fields. Americus Featherman traveled extensively throughout Louisiana and produced three reports on the botany (Brown 1944). In his (Featherman 1871:78) list of species collected during his botanical survey of southern and central Louisiana in 1870, Featherman gives the following entry: "*Sarracenia rubra* Walt, [this is what Featherman called the species] Red Flowered, Trumpet-Leaf, Covington, St. Tammany," which, except for the abbreviation of St. Tammany, is exactly what is written on the specimen label. Reading Featherman's (1870, 1871, 1872) accounts of his extensive botanical surveys of Louisiana leaves no doubt of his competence as a careful botanist and researcher (see brief account of his Louisiana botanical career in MacRoberts [1984] and of his Louisiana botanical publications in Ewan [1967]).

The provenance of the Carpenter specimen is less certain. The original label reads "*Sarracenia purpurea*, wet pine woods, St. Helen, La." This was annotated by Charles Mohr who purchased Carpenter's collection some years after his death: "*Sarracenia purpurea* L., St Helena Parish, Carpenter 1842." Because in 1842 St. Helena Parish encompassed not only the present parish but also the northwestern quarter of Tangipahoa Parish, it is impossible to know from which present-day parish the specimen may have come. Carpenter was a prominent Louisiana botanist during the first half of the nineteenth century who collaborated with the leading botanists and naturalists of his time, including Charles Lyell and John James Audubon (Cocks 1914). He collaborated with J.L. Riddell and Josiah Hale on a work entitled "Plants of Louisiana," which, unfortunately, was never published and is now lost. However, J.L. Riddell in 1852 published an abridged version "Catalogus Florae Ludovicianaë," and in his introductory remarks, Riddell writes: "The following systematic list, embodying the results of a great many years of observation, by Dr. Josiah Hale, by the late Professor W.M. Carpenter, and by the author, has been abridged from a manuscript work, contributed by the author, in 1851, to the Smithsonian Institution. The MS. work alluded to is entitled, 'Plants of Louisiana.' It comprises the technical and the vulgar names of the flowering and filicoid species of plants, well ascertained as growing within the limits of the State of Louisiana, [nearly all of which are represented by specimens in the author's herbarium],—with special localities, times of flowering, and full descriptions of the new species." Unfortunately, this manuscript no longer exists and we are simply left with the bare list, which contains about 1800 taxa and which remained the most extensive compilation for Louisiana until 1982 (MacRoberts 1984). As MacRoberts (1984:13) says: "an examination of Riddell's list leaves one with a feeling of confidence in his reports." Interestingly, *S. purpurea* is on the list but, of course, without provenance or collector identification. But it seems likely that this was the Carpenter specimen.

While labeling error, as Naczi et al. (1999) suggest, is always possible, there is no evidence of such in these cases, and there is strong corroborative evidence that the Featherman specimen came from Louisiana. As to the Carpenter specimen, there is corroborative evidence of its provenance, not strong but suggestive. Thus, there seems no reason to remove *Sarracenia purpurea* from the Louisiana flora.

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